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INTELLIGENCER

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'Star Wars' Book War?

THE HOOPLA LAST WEEK FOR THE PENTAGON's latest report on Soviet military gains was aimed, most observers assumed, at getting support for President Reagan's "Star Wars" program. But some conservatives claim the Defense Department was also trying to outflank a highly alarmist rival book, which is being financed by wealthy conservatives and points out that defense spending is below what Jimmy Carter budgeted.

The book, *Soviet Military Supremacy*, by Quentin Crommelin Jr. and David S. Sullivan, was submitted for CIA approval—because Sullivan is a former agency analyst—last December 27. Such reviews usually take 30 days, but the authors didn't get the go-ahead until mid-March, making it impossible, they say, for their work to be out before the Pentagon's *Soviet Military Power*. The Pentagon report was released April 2, two weeks early, charges one conservative close to the Pentagon.

The private work was deliberately delayed, this conservative suggested, because of its revelations—such as that the Reagan administration has spent \$38 billion less in real terms on defense than Carter recommended. And that, meanwhile, the Russians have been testing a Darth Vader-style space fighter plane that can shoot down satellites. Crommelin notes that Reagan "owned up" to the defense-spending shortfall around the time the CIA finally cleared the book.

CIA official Chuck Wilson, who headed the review of the book, said clearance took so long because Sullivan was dilatory in providing the agency with some of his sources. And Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Commander John Woodhouse denied that the publication of the department's report had been accelerated. "I've never even seen their book," he said. He probably will: Crommelin says that 2 million copies will be distributed.

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